

Message Text

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STADIS//////////

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, NPG, NO
SUBJ: NORWEGIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS NEUTROM BOMB

REF: (A) NATO 5237 (B) STATE 184569

1. INTRODUCTION: VERY FEW NORWEGIAN OPINION LEADERS HERE, HAVE
AS YET FOCUSED ON THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION AND
DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTROM BOMB. PRESS COVERAGE HAS,
TO DATE, BEEN LIMITED, CONSISTING LARGELY OF FACTUAL
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REPORTS WITH SOME LIMITED EDITORIAL SPECULATION ON THE
IMPLICATIONS OF THE WEAPONS. DUE TO THE TRADITIONAL
JUL-AUG VACATION PERIOD MISSION CONTACTS WITH PARTICI-
PANTS AND OBSERVERS IN THE SECURITY/DEFENSE FIELD
HAVE NOT BEEN AS FREQUENT AS USUAL. THE FOLLOWING
ANALYSIS IS, ACCORDINGLY, SOMEWHAT TENTATIVE AND WILL
BE UPDATED AS APPROPRIATE IN THE COMING WEEKS.

2. LIKELY ATTITUDE OF NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT: OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT SOPHISTICATED THINKERS IN THE FIELD, SUCH AS DEFENSE UNDER SECRETARY HOLST AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNDER SECRETARY STOLTENBERG, REGARD THE ADVENT OF THE NEUTROM BOMB MUCH THE SAME WAY AS THEY REGARD THE ADVENT OF PRECISION GUIDED MUNITIONS (PGMs). THEY ARE AWARE OF AND SENSITIVE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY INTO THE ALLIANCE AND THE GREATER OPTIONS WHICH IT OFFERS. THE NEUTROM BOMB IS ATTRACTIVE TO THEM ON THE ONE HAND BECAUSE OF ITS SURGICAL PRECISION WHICH CAN SPARE LARGE NUMBERS OF NORWEGIAN NON-COMBATANTS IN THE ACCEPTED WAR SCENARIO WHICH ASSUMES THAT BATTLES FOUGHT ON THE NORTHERN FLANK WOULD LIKELY BE FOUGHT ON NORWEGIAN TERRITORY. ON THE OTHER HAND THE NEUTROM BOMB IS PROBABLY VIEWED BY PEOPLE SUCH AS HOLST AND STOLTENBERG AS A WEAPON THAT IS DESIGNED TO BE EMPLOYED LARGELY ON THE CENTRAL FRONT. IN OTHER WORDS, ITS RELEVANCE TO THE NORTHERN FLANK UNLIKE PGMS IS LARGELY PERIPHERAL. THESE SAME PEOPLE WOULD ALSO BE CONCERNED WITH THE ESCALATION POSSIBILITIES INHERENT IN EMPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTROM BOMB WHICH THEY COULD FORESEE AS LEADING TO A NUCLEAR EXCHANGE. SUCH AN EXCHANGE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE EXTREMELY RELEVANT TO NORWAY BECAUSE THE COUNTRY LIES WITHIN THE PATH OF ANY MISSILES DIRECTED AT THE CRITICAL SOVIET MURMANSK BASES. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT SOME LEFT-LEANING MEMBERS OF THE BODY POLITIC DEPLORE WHAT THEY CONSIDER THE DEHUMANIZING ASPECTS

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OF THE NEUTROM BOMB, MUCH AS HAVE MANY COMMENTATORS IN AMERICAN AND WESTERN EUROPEAN JOURNALS. IN SUM, THE ATTITUDE OF THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT IS ANYTHING BUT FIRM BUT CAN BE ANTICIPATED TO INCLUDE THE ELEMENTS DISCUSSED ABOVE. WE WOULD ALSO ANTICIPATE THAT THE GON WOULD NOT TAKE ANY STRONG POSITION AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT OR DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTROM BOMB (THOUGH AS NOTED BELOW, ITS DEPLOYMENT IN NORWAY WOULD OF COURSE BE PRECLUDED BY STANDING GON POLICY).

3. PUBLIC OPINION: BECAUSE OF NORWAY'S WELL KNOWN ATTITUDE AGAINST THE DEPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON NORWEGIAN SOIL IN PEACETIME AND THE WIDESPREAD ABHORRENCE OF ALL DETAILS OF NUCLEAR WAR, IT CAN BE ANTICIPATED THAT CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF NORWEGIAN SOCIETY WILL REACT NEGATIVELY TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTROM BOMB. HOWEVER, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THAT A GROUND SWELL OF POPULAR SENTIMENT STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE WEAPONS' EMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE WOULD DEVELOP TO THE POINT THAT IT WOULD FORCE A NEGATIVE POSITION ON THE PART OF THE GON. THE NORWEGIAN PUBLIC WILL, OF COURSE, ALSO BE INFLUENCED BY THE REACTIONS OF OTHER NORDIC COUNTRIES.

4. CONCLUSION: WE BELIEVE THAT NORWEGIAN MEDIA DURING

THE COMING MONTHS WILL TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO THE
DEVELOPMENT AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTROM BOMB AND
THAT ALL ASPECTS BOTH NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE WILL BE AIRED.
HOWEVER, WE EXPECT THAT THE ULTIMATE GON DECISION WOULD
BE SUPPORTATIVE OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTROM
BOMB IN EUROPE, IF THAT IS THE USG'S DECISION.
BREMER

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